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Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 IGA-02 AID-05 ACDA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00

L-03 EUR-12 /068 W
---------- 123012
R 301814Z JAN 76
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6865
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 1016

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PFOR, IV
SUBJECT: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS STUDY: IVORY COAST

REFERENCE STATE 020621

1. IVORY COAST MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IS MODEST, TOTALING APPROXIMATELY 7,000 MEN INCLUDING A THREE-BATTALION ARMY, 3,000-MAN GERDARMERIE FORCE, PATROL BOAT NAVY AND AN AIR FORCE OF TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT. EXCEPT FOR FIVE FRENCH-MADE AMX-13 TANKS, THE IVORY COAST POSSESSES NO HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED MILITARY WEAPONS SUCH AS JET FIGHTERS, RADAR, ETC.

2. IT HAS BEEN THE CONSISTENT POLICY OF PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY AND THE GOIC IN THE 15 YEARS SINCE INDEPENDENCE TO LIMIT
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THE SIZE AND POWER OF THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN IVORY COAST. THIS ARISES BOTH FORM HOUPHUOET'S AWARENESS OF THE

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POTENTIAL COUP THREAT WHICH THE MILITARY POSE AND FROM
HIS POLICY OF EMPHASIZING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IVORY
COAST'S SUCCESS IN THIS SPHERE IS WELL KNOWN. ALSO WELL
KNOWN IS IVORY COAST'S DIALOGUE POLICY WHICH SPRINGS
FROM HOUPHOUET'S GENUINE CONVICTION THAT DISPUTES MUST BE
RESOLVED THROUGH NEGOTIATION RATHER THAN THROUGH ARMED CONFLICT.
RESTRAINTS ON ACQUISITION OF SOPHISTRICATED WEAPONS RESULT FROM
THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE GOIC THEREFORE RATHER THAN FROM
BUDGETARY LIMITATIONS. THE EMBASSY FORESEES NO CHANGE IN THIS POLICY
IN THE NEAR-TERM FUTURE, EVEN IN UNLIKELY EVENT WERE SOPHISTICATED
ARMS TO BE PROVIDED FREE.

3. EMBASSY DOES NOT RPT NOT SEE SIGNIFICANT ROLE FOR USG
IN PROVIDING INCENTIVES TO IVORY COAST IN ARMS RESTRAINT.
THE IVORY COAST MILITARY RELATIONSHIP REMAINS VIRTUALLY
EXCLUSIVELY WITH FRANCE, THE FORMER COLONIAL POWER, WHICH
IS THE SOURCE OF THE LIMITED INVENTORY OF ARMS THE
GOIC POSSESSES. FRANCE ALSO PROVIDES SUBSTANTIAL TRAINING
AND ADVISER ASSISTANCE TO THE GOIC AS WELL AS MAINTAINING
A FRENCH MARINE BATTALION OF APPROXIMATELY 400 MEN
STATIONED PERMANENTLY IN IVORY COAST ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF
ABIDJAN. GIVEN THE FRENCH LINK AND THE HISTORICAL ABSENCE
OF ANY US MILITARY ASSISTANCE ROLE IN IVORY COAST, EMBASSY
BELIEVES IT NEITHER FEASIBLE NOR IN US INTEREST TO
ENTER INTO ARMS RESTRAINT PICTURE AT THIS TIME THROUGH
MEANS SUGGESTED REFTEL SUCH AS POLITICAL/SECURITY
GUARANTEES OR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE LINKED TO ARMS RESTRAINT.

4. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IVORY COAST, GIVEN ITS EMPHASIS
ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEFUL DIALOGUE TO REVOLVE
DISPUTES, MIGHT WELL BE INCLINED TO LOOK FAVORABLY ON AND
PARTICIPATE IN REGIONAL AFRICAN ARMS RESTRAINT AGREEMENTS
SUCH AS MIGHT BE WORKED OUT THROUGH ENTENTE, CEDEAO OR
OAU.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMS, CONVENTIONAL WARFARE, STUDIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ABIDJA01016
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760037-0748
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t1976017/aaaaafes.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 20621
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <23 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REGIONAL ARMS RESTRAINTS STUDY: IVORY COAST
TAGS: MILI, PFOR, IV
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006